

Conference on Disarmament

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Final record of the one thousand two hundred and sixty-ninth plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 28 August 2012, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Hellmut Hoffmann(Germany)

The President: I declare open the one thousand two hundred and sixty-ninth plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. Before we start our official business, please allow me to welcome the participants in the 2012 United Nations Fellowship Programme on Disarmament, who will follow our meeting today. I would also very much like to welcome the Secretary-General of the Conference, who is with us again today; I am very pleased about that. Before we start our business, I would like to give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan, who wishes to make an announcement on the International Day against Nuclear Tests.

Mr. Tileuberdi (Kazakhstan): Mr. President, please accept my congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I assure you of our delegation's support and readiness to cooperate with you closely to seek the way out of the present impasse in the Conference. I also express my appreciation to your predecessors for their energetic endeavours during their tenure.

Before starting today's discussions, I would like to felicitate all of you on the occasion of the International Day against Nuclear Tests, to be observed tomorrow, on 29 August. Let me recall that, on 2 December 2009, the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly adopted resolution 64/35 declaring 29 August the International Day against Nuclear Tests. As you know, Kazakhstan's initiative was unanimously supported by all Member States of the United Nations. This fact speaks for the firm commitment of the international community to take further actions against nuclear tests.

Our undertaking is meant to galvanize the efforts of all stakeholders, including civil society, public diplomacy and mass media, in promoting awareness and education about the terrifying consequences of nuclear explosions. It also serves our common goal of living in a world free of nuclear weapons. 29 August is the day Kazakhstan decided to close the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. This day reminds us how fragile our world is and the real danger posed by nuclear weapons.

Since 1949, over four decades, the former Soviet Government detonated more than 456 atomic bombs at the Semipalatinsk test site. This is one third of nuclear tests carried out by all nuclear States since 1945. About one and a half million people were affected by the consequences of nuclear tests, and a huge territory comparable to the size of Germany was affected by radiation.

In April 2010, during his visit to the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, said:

In 1991, President Nazarbayev showed extraordinary leadership by closing this Semipalatinsk nuclear test site and banishing nuclear weapons from Kazakhstan. It was a visionary step, a true declaration of independence. Today, this site stands as a symbol of disarmament and hope for the future. To realize a world free from nuclear weapons is a top priority for the United Nations, and the most ardent aspiration of mankind.

To commemorate the third anniversary of the International Day against Nuclear Tests, Kazakhstan is currently hosting the 2012 Astana-Semipalatinsk Forum entitled "From a nuclear test ban to a nuclear-weapon-free world" and welcomes more than 200 delegates from 75 countries. Most of the participants are parliamentarians, heads of international organizations, academicians, experts and well-known activists from NGOs.

Today delegations take part in the events organized at the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site and the National Nuclear Research Centre in Kurchatov city. Tomorrow, at the opening ceremony in Astana, the President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nazarbayev, will address the Conference. Also, there will be a number of thematic side events.

The Forum will focus on the topical issues of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation agenda, where primary importance will be attached to the banning of nuclear tests, as well as the humanitarian, environmental and economic consequences of nuclear explosions. Cooperation in security issues, abandoning nuclear deterrence policy and granting negative security assurances are also among priorities of the Forum.

Hosting this kind of annual international meeting, Kazakhstan continues to further promote multilateral endeavours aimed at outlawing any type of weapon of mass destruction, first and foremost nuclear weapons, as well as ensuring broader support for a nuclear-test-ban regime.

I would also like to announce that, just recently, on 22 August, the Government of Kazakhstan launched a new international campaign entitled "Atom". The acronym stands for "Abolish testing our mission". Mr. Karipbek Kuyukov, who suffered the consequences of nuclear tests in Kazakhstan, is designated as the honorary ambassador of the project. The main objective of this campaign is to reduce the nuclear threat, to create awareness about the devastating consequences of nuclear explosions, and to consolidate support among all nations against nuclear tests.

The project runs its own website and social media, where you can see relevant documents, short television commercials and check out other information, articles and links. Through existing social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Google we will provide for direct dialogue between the victims of nuclear tests, NGOs and millions of ordinary people.

Supporters and followers of the Atom project are urged to sign a petition to stop nuclear weapon tests. This document will be forwarded to the heads of States possessing nuclear weapons, as well as to the Governments of countries that have not joined yet the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty or the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

A short presentation on the Atom project will be distributed by our Mission later today among the Geneva diplomatic community, including the Conference on Disarmament members and observer States, international and non-governmental organizations.

Of course, with your support, the Atom project can become an influential campaign aimed at changing the world and securing the future for future generations. We urge all of you to sign on for a nuclear-safe world.

The President: I thank the representative of Kazakhstan, Ambassador Tileuberdi, for his statement, and let me add that I think it is very appropriate that we are reminded of the International Day against Nuclear Tests in this forum also.

As you will recall, at the last plenary meeting on the issue of revitalization, I had to adjourn the meeting because of the late hour. However, when I adjourned the meeting I still had on my list the following speakers: Algeria, Nigeria and the Islamic Republic of Iran. In addition, China and Canada have asked for the floor on the same issue. Therefore, before turning to the issue under consideration today, namely the consideration and adoption of the annual report to the General Assembly, I will give the floor to these countries on the issue of revitalization.

However, before actually doing so I would like to draw your attention to a useful publication by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) that has just appeared. It contains papers that have been made available to the Presidents of this year's annual session to draw upon in their introductions to the thematic debates under the schedule of activities. As the Director of UNIDIR, Ms. Theresa Hitchins, quite rightly notes in her foreword to this publication, these papers not only provide newcomers to the work of the Conference on Disarmament with insights into how key issues on the agenda have been

shaped over the years, but also shed light on the complex issues at play as well. It has been put in the pigeonholes.

Let me now turn to the speakers' list, still on the topic of revitalization. I give the floor to the representative of Algeria to pick up where, unfortunately, he had to interrupt his statement in our last plenary meeting. Mr. Khelif, you have the floor.

Mr. Khelif (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Algerian delegation would like to begin its statement from the beginning, rather than the point at which it ended during the previous session. To begin with, Sir, the Algerian delegation would like to express its warm congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and, at the same time, to express its full support to you and wish you success in the discharge of your functions. At the same time, we would like to salute the valuable efforts made by your predecessor the Ambassador of France during his presidency, and all the members of his delegation for their efforts. In addition, we would like to join you in welcoming participants in the United Nations disarmament training programme and, also, in sharing the substance of the appeal and statement made by the Ambassador of Kazakhstan on the occasion of the International Day against Nuclear Tests. Algeria was used against its will to stage nuclear tests, the impact of which on human beings and on nature remains evident today; it values an occasion such as this, which underscores the need to stop nuclear testing as a step towards and a contribution to nuclear disarmament.

(*spoke in French*)

The delegation of Algeria would also like to reiterate today its position on the subject under discussion, that is, the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament. Algeria has set out its position on this subject on a number of previous occasions. First of all, it wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

International security conditions and the multiple security threats and challenges facing the Conference on Disarmament should prompt the Conference to resume its work as a matter of urgency. Its prolonged inaction and paralysis are placing the Conference at risk and calling its relevance into question. This situation should encourage us to act in concert so as to be able to move forward together in our work if we really wish to preserve the relevance and the credibility of the Conference as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

The second round of discussions on this subject comes at a good time to address substantively the causes of the deadlock in the Conference and to reflect, with a due sense of our responsibilities, on the path to be taken to ensure that the Conference is able to fulfil its mandate.

Understanding the situation in the Conference on Disarmament requires an in-depth analysis of the dynamic relationships between its mandate, environment and rules of procedure, including its institutional framework. This exercise should take into account the mandates of other parallel bodies and negotiating forums whose fields of activities could directly affect the functioning of the Conference.

Various interpretations, explanations and proposed solutions have been put forward to justify this situation, in line with the various agendas of the different groups of member States.

Essentially, in my delegation's view, the paralysis in the Conference is not caused by the approach adopted. The main reason, as rightly pointed out by the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters in document A/66/125 of 11 July 2011, is the lack of political will and the combination of political factors stemming mainly from the diverging views of States and groups of member States concerning the priorities to be established and how to

strike a balance between the mandates in relation to the elements of the programme of work, particularly for nuclear disarmament.

It will be recalled that the Conference on Disarmament was established in 1978 during the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in order to revitalize the disarmament machinery at that time. Its mandate was to negotiate disarmament instruments with a view to facilitating the implementation of the programme of action adopted at that session, in which nuclear disarmament was the highest priority. Since then we have adopted the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which, despite constant appeals, has still not entered into force. We have been reminded of this Treaty's importance here today by the Ambassador of Kazakhstan.

Save these two exceptions, the Conference has not made any progress in the field of nuclear disarmament.

Moreover, there has been a delay in the implementation of systematic and progressive measures for the transparent, verifiable and irreversible elimination of nuclear arsenals because of the attitude of some nuclear Powers.

Thus, the Conference on Disarmament is not the cause of the deadlock but is hostage to the lack of political will, and, as a result of the inaction of the Conference on Disarmament, the whole process of nuclear disarmament is being held up.

Some minor adjustments could no doubt be made to the way in which the Conference functions, but considering a solution to the impasse in the Conference from this standpoint, through the revision of the rules of procedure, for example, to limit the scope of the consensus rule solely to substantive issues, could lead us down the wrong path. The Conference on Disarmament has worked in the past under the same rules and with the same terms of reference as those we have now.

The consensus rule is also a means to protect the national security interests of all States, in the same fashion, and not just the most powerful of them. By taking account of the security interests of all, in principle this rule confers legitimacy upon the treaty concluded and guarantees its universality and effectiveness.

We might also consider making a few adjustments to the Conference's working methods, for example by adopting a simplified and flexible programme of work that would not necessarily require the establishment of subsidiary bodies with detailed mandates. This option, which, it should be remembered, was championed by Ambassador Pedro Oyarce of Chile during his term as President of the Conference, and was eloquently recalled in the previous meeting last week by the Ambassador of Argentina, the representative of the Russian Federation and other ambassadors, is a means to keep the Conference on Disarmament active. The discussions carried out within this framework could help to establish the necessary political and technical conditions.

This approach would allow us to keep the Conference on Disarmament active, and the discussions carried out within this framework could contribute to the establishment of the political and technical conditions necessary for future negotiations to take place. For this purpose, the establishment of a group of governmental experts to prepare the technical consensus on disarmament instruments might be considered.

However, this approach provides no guarantees that the negotiations will start or that the functioning of the Conference on Disarmament will improve. There is also a risk of duplication of effort and overlap between the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission, which is, by vocation, a deliberative body.

With regard to the Conference's agenda, we do not consider the agenda items that are based on the "Decalogue" and place the emphasis on the nuclear threat to be in any way outdated. Nuclear weapons are still the most serious threat for humanity, and this threat must be averted.

It is important in this context to ask ourselves about the impact of the historic decision, taken in 1995, to extend the NPT for an indefinite period and about the dynamics of multilateral disarmament diplomacy, including within the Conference. We should also be asking ourselves, very specifically, whether 17 years after that historic conference, nuclear disarmament efforts have really matched the commitment of the nuclear-weapon States, as iterated at that time, to move systematically and progressively forward towards reducing nuclear weapons overall, and ultimately eliminating them.

Before and immediately after the 2010 NPT Review Conference, we sensed a renewed interest in a nuclear-weapon-free world. The decisions adopted at that Conference include important measures that we expect to see implemented. Yet at the same time we also see this progress being contradicted by the fact that there are still tens of thousands of nuclear weapons in existence serving nuclear deterrence doctrines that are not conducive to nuclear disarmament.

The delegation of Algeria is mindful of the sincere declarations of those who would seek to rescue the disarmament project, if the deadlock in the Conference persists, by advocating alternative paths. However, Algeria believes that disappointment in the face of the Conference's inaction should not prevent us from seeing the effectiveness of the Conference's multilateral approach as a means to address threats collectively. Moreover, it should not lead us down a path that would cause the advances achieved to be destroyed without giving us the opportunity to reach our objectives; adjusting the Conference's working methods, turning to other mechanisms and calling the current agenda into question are not the way either to resolve the root causes of the problems or, in particular, to conclude multilateral instruments benefiting from the necessary political grounding.

In this context, if we want our efforts to succeed, we must apply them as part of a unified endeavour which addresses issues of collective security and encompasses all security threats and the security interests of all and is underpinned by the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations.

In this spirit, the delegation of Algeria continues to believe that decision CD/1864, which was adopted by consensus in May 2009, constitutes a good basis for resolving the stalemate in the Conference. As has been reaffirmed on several occasions by the delegation of Algeria, this decision is not a finished product and could be improved in order to lift the obstacles that have prevented its implementation and to lead to a collective undertaking.

The proposal made by Egypt this year and the proposals made by Belarus and Brazil in 2010 were attempts to move in this direction, but failed to produce a consensus because the conditions were not yet right. This is why, Mr. President, we urge you to continue your efforts, in consultation with the incoming President of the 2013 session, to facilitate consensus and the programme of work on the basis of decision CD/1864 and the multiple efforts made thereafter.

If the divergences that are preventing the Conference on Disarmament from discharging its mandate persist, we think it necessary to convene a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament to build consensus on disarmament priorities and multilateral disarmament mechanisms, including the relationship between the deliberative bodies and the Conference on Disarmament as a negotiating body.

Lastly, Mr. President, your presidency comes at a time when we have to negotiate and adopt the report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly of the

United Nations on the activities that we have carried out during the 2012 session but which have not, unfortunately, allowed us to give effect to the innumerable resolutions of the General Assembly that the Secretary-General transmitted to us at the beginning of the session, and on the results obtained, which are not, unfortunately, encouraging.

The delegation of Algeria has read your draft report. We wish to thank you for this draft and to assure you of our support in ensuring that all members of the Conference on Disarmament are happy with it and thus that we are able to adopt it.

Generally speaking the delegation of Algeria sees this draft as an attempt to reflect the activities of the Conference on Disarmament in a factual manner, as required under the rules of procedure. The text could be improved, however, to clarify the status of the schedule of debates presented by the Ambassador of Ethiopia in his capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament in document CD/WP.571/Rev.1 and to better reflect the content of the debates on various topics, including those relating to the programme of work and the views on this subject expressed by the delegations and groups of delegations throughout the session. In fact, in an attempt to move us out of the stalemate in the consultations, many delegations reiterated their support for decision CD/1864. Some delegations also advocated the simplified format of the programme of work. These efforts and initiatives could certainly be reflected in your report, Mr. President. Suggestions for the revitalization of the Conference were also put forward, and these ideas might also be reflected in the report, albeit in a manner that conforms to the rules of procedure.

Mr. President, the delegation of Algeria assures you of its full support, will participate in the consultations to be held on the subject of the draft report and will provide you with written submissions to facilitate agreement on this subject.

The President: I thank the representative of Algeria for his statement and, before I give the floor to the representative of Nigeria, can I ask you to focus your statements now on revitalization? We will deal with the report as our second item today.

I now give the floor to Mr. Laro, the representative of Nigeria.

Mr. Laro (Nigeria): Mr. President, as this is the first time that the Nigerian delegation is taking the floor under your presidency, I wish to congratulate you on becoming President of the Conference on Disarmament and I assure you of our support.

The long-standing inability of the Conference on Disarmament to act on the mandate given to it by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is damaging its reputation and credibility. It was our hope that the Conference would benefit from the momentum generated by the high-level meeting convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in September 2010 and the follow-up to that meeting held in July 2011. The clear signal that the Nigerian delegation got from those meetings was that the world has grown tired of a non-performing Conference on Disarmament, endlessly going round in circles like a dog chasing its own tail.

As we come to the end of yet another barren session, despite the best intentions and courageous efforts of the current and past Presidents of the Conference, Nigeria would like to register its profound disappointment that underachievement seems to have become a perennial feature of the Conference. We sense a growing frustration within the international community with this state of affairs, and we are convinced that it should not go on indefinitely.

In order to revitalize the Conference, we consider it necessary that measures be taken to review and expand its membership, foster greater engagement with civil society and, perhaps more importantly, for member States to demonstrate the political will and commitment necessary to break the current deadlock and move the Conference forward.

In a statement delivered on 27 July 2011 at the follow-up meeting by the delegation of the Netherlands on behalf of a cross-regional group of 40 countries, including Nigeria, we affirmed that if the multilateral disarmament machinery, especially the Conference on Disarmament, is not able to overcome its crisis, then the international community, and the General Assembly in particular, will need to respond and give serious consideration to ways and means to overcome it. This assertion was right then and is still right today, and Nigeria stands by it.

Mr. Daryaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, at the outset allow me to express my appreciation of all of your diligent efforts in presenting the draft annual report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly and the organized and disciplined manner that you are presiding over the conference. I assure you of the full support of my delegation in discharging your important task.

I would like to join other colleagues in the past meeting in bidding farewell to the distinguished ambassadors of Egypt and Switzerland and wish Ambassador Badr and Ambassador Fasel all the best for their future endeavours. Let me also associate myself with the statements of the Group of 21, as delivered by the distinguished Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic. As a person that benefited a lot from a United Nations Disarmament fellowship in 1998, allow me also to welcome the distinguished fellows participating in the United Nations disarmament fellowship this year and wish them every success.

The Conference on Disarmament, like every other international body, needs regular evaluation and assessment. The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament put into place disarmament machinery. There is a need to address challenges to its effectiveness. The best way for addressing these challenges is by convening the fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament and overhauling the whole machinery. Therefore we support the early convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Mixing the mandates of the component of current machinery, namely deliberative body with negotiation body, or simply merging the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the Conference on Disarmament and the First Committee, without paying attention to the root causes of the problem, would not help in resolving the problem and may further complicate the issue.

The Conference is an illustrious body in the field of multilateral disarmament diplomacy with a record of achievement in legally binding instruments that forms the cornerstone and major body of the international non-proliferation regime. While the *raison d'être* of the Conference on Disarmament is nuclear disarmament, it is an unfortunate fact that the contribution of this body to nuclear disarmament has been little and in no way meets the expectations of the international community. This problem does not originate in the institution itself, but is rooted in the lack of political will of the members.

The Conference remains the sole multilateral negotiation body on disarmament, and I do not see any alternative body that has the potential to replace it. The specific composition, wide agenda and the special rules of procedure give the Conference on Disarmament a unique position. We support every measure that strengthens its credibility and its proper functioning. I believe that promoting the work of the Conference cannot be achieved by changing the format or the modality of the rules of procedure. It cannot be achieved by changing our interpretation of these rules, namely the rules of consensus, either. It is worthwhile recalling that not only all existing multilateral treaties were negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament under the same rules of procedure, including the rule of consensus, but also that the sensitive nature of issues related to the security of nations and disarmament obligate us to adopt similar rules in the negotiation of multilateral disarmament treaties in other forums.

As I have said in many meetings of the Conference, the crux of the problem of inactivity of the Conference over the last decade is the lack of political will for the elimination of the common threat posed to the international community by nuclear weapons and inertia in changing the self-centred attitude towards the noble approach of cooperative sustainable security. The persistent resistance against the active functioning of the Conference on Disarmament to start negotiations on all core issues is mainly because the Conference is not mandated to maintain the status quo; it is mandated to negotiate multilateral disarmament treaties and thus to change the status quo. If the Conference had fulfilled its real mandate through the negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention, the status quo would have been changed, and those who had had the special privileges of being regarded as the haves would have lost this advantage. Therefore, resistance against fulfilling the mandate of the Conference is great and, as long as the mindset for recognition of some values for nuclear weapons does not change, and the presumption of the cold war continues, we will not have any breakthrough in fulfilling the mandate of this body. Thus, this impasse is not a problem of form, but a problem of substance; it does not relate to any procedural problems in the Conference, but has a close link with the lack of progress in the realm of disarmament.

The Conference is not a single-issue venue, and lack of consensus on the scope of negotiation on one issue cannot prevent delegations from starting negotiations on others. We believe that the early commencement of negotiations within the Conference on a nuclear weapons convention that prohibits the possession, development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of nuclear weapons, leading to their ultimate destruction within a specified time frame, is the urgent need of the disarmament machinery today. If we start this negotiation in the Conference, we will be in a position to comprehensively tackle all the core issues on the Conference agenda in a balanced manner and really revitalize the Conference and the whole machinery today.

I wish to emphasize again that all member States should demonstrate strong political will and exercise the utmost flexibility in order to start the substantive work of the Conference and discussion of the possible expansion of the Conference and to increase the Conference's interaction with impartial NGOs and civil society. The radical proposal for the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty outside the Conference is neither feasible nor acceptable; also, the Conference is not a subsidiary body of the United Nations, so any recommendation by the General Assembly will therefore be of an advisory nature to the Conference on which it can take its own decision.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, as this is the first time I have taken the floor during your presidency, allow me first of all to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference. I believe that your wealth of experience and abilities will undoubtedly bring the work of the Conference to a successful close in 2012, and the Chinese delegation will fully support you in your work.

We have already discussed the revitalization of the Conference at two plenary meetings this year. During the discussions, some colleagues expressed disappointment about the deadlock, but most member States said they still believe in and support the Conference's status and authority as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. They stressed the importance of the principle of consensus, saying that further consensus should be built and that the start of substantive work in the Conference should be promoted. The Chinese delegation's views on this are as follows.

First of all, the Conference is the most appropriate multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. In the past, it and its predecessors have concluded many treaties that serve as pillars of the multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation regime, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. It has the broadest, most

representative membership of any mechanism, and rules of procedure that fully protect the interests of its member States. It has extensive negotiating experience and specialized negotiating teams. There is no comparison with other mechanisms. Therefore, the Conference cannot be replaced as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

Second, abandoning the Conference is certainly not the proper way to solve our problems. Last year, intense debates were held in the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly on the work of the Conference, FMCT negotiations and multilateral disarmament mechanisms. The Chinese position regarding the Conference is clear, and we have consistently supported and defended the Conference's position of authority as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. We support its rule of consensus, and we support the start of substantive work in the Conference on the basis of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. We do not approve of establishing other mechanisms or moving work on some of the Conference's core issues, including FMCT negotiations, outside the Conference. If we start from scratch in this way, we cannot be sure that all the major players will participate in the negotiations, we will not be able to achieve the treaty's nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives, and we will not be benefiting the healthy, orderly development of the international arms control and disarmament process as a whole.

Looking to the next step, we should continue our efforts to end the deadlock in the Conference as soon as possible. First of all, there is no substitute for focusing on how to make a swift start on substantive work. In our past and current discussions, the parties have put forward many useful ideas about revitalizing the Conference which would be worth studying further. Second, we should continue to examine ways to break the deadlock in the Conference and seek a solution that is acceptable to all parties. This year at the Conference, the former President of the Conference and representative of Egypt proposed a draft programme of work, and other member States also put forward many proposals on the subject, all of which have provided us with valuable experience and a solid foundation for reconciling our differences and getting down to substantive work. Third, we should be fully aware of the effects that international and regional security situations have on the work of the Conference, and show consideration for each other's reasonable security concerns, as this will create a favourable atmosphere and favourable external conditions for breaking the deadlock.

China is willing to continue to strengthen communication and cooperation with the parties, and to strive for positive progress in promoting the work of the Conference.

Ms. Golberg (Canada): Mr. President, as this is the first time I am taking the floor, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Germany for assuming the presidency of the conference. Canada looks forward to Ambassador Hoffmann's able stewardship. As I do not wish to take the floor again under our next agenda item, let me just simply note at this stage that Canada thanks the President for his excellent first draft of the Conference on Disarmament report, which we believe represents a factual if somewhat rosy picture of the activities of this Conference in 2012. We believe that it represents a solid basis for our upcoming negotiations.

(spoke in French)

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to the recipients of disarmament scholarships who are attending our meeting today and to join with those who last week expressed their appreciation for the contributions made by our former colleagues from Egypt and Switzerland.

(spoke in English)

Discussions on the issue of the revitalization of this Conference remain important and timely. At the last round of discussions that were held, we outlined our views on this issue, during which time we felt that several important proposals were made by a number of delegations. We noted in particular the call by a significant number of participating States that there is a need to take a good hard look at the Conference rules of procedure to assess whether there is room for adjustment to enable this Conference to function as it was intended. Canada would certainly support such a review. We also welcome the United Kingdom's thoughtful proposal that we believe merits further consideration, as do those presented by Switzerland last week. At the same time, Canada is disappointed that it continues to hear voices in this room arguing that there is either little wrong with the current situation or that nothing can be done about it; that prompted us to take the floor today.

To paraphrase a statement made by my Foreign Minister to the General Assembly last year, the greatest enemies of the Conference are not those who express concern about its inability to fulfil its mandate and seek to spur action on issues the Conference has identified as significant. Rather, the greatest enemies of the Conference are those who watch its slow decline, content with the status quo inertia. The question we must now ask ourselves as we come to the end of another unsuccessful session, where we have failed to initiate negotiations, is: how long are we prepared to wait for things to change, to express frustration but not to act?

While Canada continues to believe that the desire of the vast majority of the States in this room is to resume substantive work in the Conference, it nevertheless appears that we have failed to heed the call by the General Assembly, which, in adopting its resolutions 66/44 and 66/66 last year, asked the Conference to fulfil its negotiating mandate, as was noted by the distinguished representative of Nigeria. We must now be prepared for the General Assembly to take up these issues again in October and, in parallel, to consider carefully how best we can proceed in our work in 2013 to achieve real progress on pressing global disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

Mr. Grinevich (Belarus) *(spoke in Russian)*: Mr. Hoffmann, since our delegation has taken the floor for the first time during your term as President, allow me to congratulate you on taking up your major post and state that our country fully supports you in your efforts to discharge your mandate as President of the Conference on Disarmament.

I will be brief, so that we will have more time to consider the draft report. I would like to point out that our country stands side by side with the delegations which have said that the principal reason for the failure to have a negotiating process in the Conference is the lack of political will. I would also like to draw attention to the following facts. We often say that the Conference has agreed a number of very important international disarmament treaties. But we forget to note that these negotiations were preceded by agreement at the highest levels. If we recall how work started on the Biological Weapons Convention, this Convention was preceded by agreement between Leonid Brezhnev and United States President Richard Nixon. The same can be said of the ENMOD Convention. The drafting of the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons was preceded by agreement between Mikhail Gorbachev, Ronald Reagan and George Bush Senior. Where there was agreement at the highest level between the leaders of the key Powers on the need to draw up a specific treaty, the Conference on Disarmament simply had the task of fulfilling such a mandate. Concerning the treaty banning the production of fissile material, there is no such high-level agreement. Indeed, there is not even agreement on the scope of such a treaty among national experts. Here is the cause of the lack of progress in the Conference. Let us not look in our procedures for the cause of failure to act.

Now, briefly, on the proposals made on procedural issues. We view with respect the proposal made by our Secretary-General concerning the search for options for reforming the Conference, but in that regard I would like to say that we must approach this issue with great care. The current arrangements for chairing the Conference are highly democratic, and allow all countries taking part in the work of our negotiating body to occupy the post of President of the Conference in alphabetical order. This is the first point. Secondly, because of the failure to carry out substantive work, many people, probably, have simply forgotten that in the event that we begin negotiations, the post of President will become less important, and the key person in the Conference will be the Chair of the ad hoc committee entrusted with negotiations on a specific treaty. And the time during which this person will chair the ad hoc committee will not be limited, since the Chair of such an ad hoc committee will become a key person in the Conference. He will lead the search for compromise solutions and work with a specific draft treaty.

We also share the views of countries which point out that it is counterproductive to take the negotiating process outside the Conference, and in particular to begin separate talks on a treaty on the prohibition of production of fissile material. We have witnessed the Ottawa process, the Oslo process, but these are completely different matters, and we believe that version 3.0 of a separate negotiating process on an FMCT has no prospects of success if the key producers and possessors of fissile material do not participate in the process.

Ms. Fogante (Argentina) (spoke in Spanish): While we are in the closing stages of the debate on revitalization I would like to take the opportunity to reiterate a point raised by Ambassador D'Alotto of the Argentine delegation in a statement last year concerning the way in which the financial resources of this forum should be applied in future.

On that occasion Argentina stated that the Conference's financial resources should not be earmarked next year, irrespective — and this we wished to highlight in this connection — of how its work might be adjusted in future, and particularly in 2013, in order to reflect the current situation. We do not think it would be expedient to earmark the funds allocated to this forum because current circumstances might change, and this forum should always be ready and prepared to start negotiations should its members so decide.

We particularly wanted to highlight this point because it could be misinterpreted, and we were very keen to emphasize this as a key element of our position, in which we distinguish between the virtues of this body and the current inability of member States to find a lowest common denominator that might be translated into a programme of work for the start of substantive negotiations.

The President: I thank the representative of Argentina for her statement. I do not have any more speakers on my list and I do not see any flags up, so before I come to the next point on today's agenda, let me just say, in very general terms, that I believe that we had a very instructive round of discussions today and last week on revitalization. You know, I think it has become rather clear that we have quite diverse views as to the diagnosis and the treatment of the problem. However, I think that there is one point in common in nearly all the statements: we are dealing with a problem, which is the stalemate of this body, and this is very unsatisfactory. I think that this is something we all agree on.

I will leave it at that and I will proceed now to the second item on our agenda today, which is the discussion and adoption of the annual report as per our revised schedule of activities. An advance copy of the draft report was distributed by e-mail and hard copy to all members and observers on 23 August, and I am informed that you will receive the same version in all United Nations languages today in your pigeonholes. The draft report takes into account the work of the Conference until 20 August 2012, the day when the draft report was finalized and submitted for processing. The draft report lists all the documents

issued by that date. It goes without saying that the secretariat will fill in the blank spaces in the report relating to the numbers of meetings, and will update the list of documents submitted after 20 August until the conclusion of the 2012 session. In this regard, kindly note that only documents submitted by 14 September 2012 will be issued as official documents of the Conference.

Now it is my intention to consider the draft report in informal meetings with interpretation provided. Today I would like to ask you to make comments of a general nature in a formal setting. Any concrete proposals for changes to document CD/WP.572 should be submitted to the secretariat in writing by Thursday, 30 August at 3 p.m. By Friday, 31 August, on close of business, the secretariat will circulate a compilation of all amendments received, with attribution, by e-mail to all Missions that have provided their e-mail addresses. A hard copy will also be placed in the Missions' pigeonholes. In this connection the secretariat has asked me to inform you that a great number of e-mails bounced back because the respective mailboxes were full. So please check your mailboxes, and if that is the case would the Missions kindly provide the United Nations secretariat with an alternative e-mail address? Any editorial changes, as well as any discrepancies in the various language versions of the draft report, should also be communicated directly to the secretariat in writing please.

We will now begin consideration of the draft report. The floor is open for general statements, and I would invite you also to indicate, if you so wish, where you see a necessity for amendments. However, please do not enter into a drafting exercise now. Just indicate that there may be certain paragraphs or certain issues concerning which amendments might be necessary from your point of view. The floor is open.

I see the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Khelif (Algeria): The delegation of Algeria has already made reference to this subject, and would like to reiterate its thanks for the draft report, which for the most part reflects what was done during the 2012 session, the work that was carried out on the various issues and the framework of the discussions which provided our point of departure for this session.

However, the delegation of Algeria would like in a preliminary way to share some general observations concerning certain paragraphs that, in our view, will need to be reworked before we are able to reach an agreement.

The first of these is paragraph 5 and, in particular, the manner in which the message from the Secretary-General is reported. We would like the text to be improved to give a positive slant to the activities of the Conference on Disarmament and its discussions concerning what the international community expects of it during the 2012 session.

The second paragraph is paragraph 12, in section D, concerning the agenda and the programme of work for the 2012 session. My observation relates to the manner in which the proposals, efforts and consultations of members of the Conference on Disarmament relating to the programme of work are reported. It seems to us that in this paragraph these items are listed as if they were a single specific activity performed during a specific part of the year, that is, during the deliberations that took place on the proposal made by Egypt. The delegation of Algeria is of the view that discussions and consultations on the programme of work were taking place from the very outset of the session. The delegations then made several suggestions, as we said earlier in our statement.

We have listened with interest to the proposals of those who advocate a simplified programme of work. A good number of delegations have reiterated their support for document CD/1864. The document that was proposed by Ecuador and is mentioned in paragraph 26 of the draft report also addressed the issue of the programme of work. We

would ask, therefore, that in the text in this section which relates to the programme of work we try to give a general overview of all the discussions on the programme of work that took place. In this context, we can also mention the working papers that were submitted, including the document submitted by Egypt.

Paragraph 17 refers to the schedule of activities that was presented by Ethiopia during its presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We would like the status of this document to be clarified and for the text to indicate that this was an initiative taken under the responsibility of the President, acting in consultation with the other Presidents.

Section G concerns the improvement and effective functioning of the Conference. This subject was also addressed throughout the session in the various statements we heard, and a number of delegations addressed this issue. For this reason we do not want the consultations on this issue to be reported only in the context of the schedule of activities that was presented by the President, particularly on the issue of revitalization. In this context, we could also mention the working paper that was proposed by Ecuador.

I turn now to paragraph 27. Although the two Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament did indeed call on UNIDIR to prepare summary documents on the activities that were carried out in the Conference on Disarmament and on the subjects that were discussed, we would prefer that here it is simply stated that the Presidents of the Conference, specifically the two Ambassadors mentioned, the Ambassador of Finland and the Ambassador of France, made introductory statements based on the documents that they had asked UNIDIR to prepare.

That's essentially it. Another paragraph about the schedule of activities has been presented by the Ethiopian President. It would be a good idea to improve the drafting of this paragraph to prevent any possibility of readers thinking that the issue of the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament is an agenda item. We are not going to propose a new wording at the moment – we will do that later; but we must distinguish between agenda items that have been considered under the schedule of activities and the discussions concerning this document that have provided delegations with an opportunity to comment on the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament. It is essential to make a distinction between the two, that is, to separate agenda items from the issue of revitalization.

Mr. President, these were a few preliminary observations on the various sections of the report that the delegation of Algeria wished to communicate to members of the Conference on Disarmament in a formal setting. The delegation of Algeria stands ready to offer you its support in ensuring that the Conference is able to adopt a consensus report as soon as possible.

The President: I thank the representative of Algeria for the statement and I look forward to the amendments submitted in writing to the secretariat by Thursday, as I said a minute ago.

I see that the representative of Egypt has asked for the floor. Please Sir, you have the floor.

Mr. Elatawy (Egypt): Mr. President, we thank you for the draft that you have submitted for the report of the Conference on Disarmament. I know that it was not your intention to debate right now any of the issues in the report. However, since we have gone into remarks on actual paragraphs, I find that I have to respond to my dear colleague from Algeria regarding what he mentioned about document CD/1933/Rev.1. May I just remind him that it does have a different status than the other documents submitted during the 2012 session? This proposed programme of work was tabled, there was a move to take a decision on it, and a decision was not taken because of the objection raised; I mean we did not have consensus on it. No other proposals were ever tabled, or submitted, as a proposed

programme of work, and this point has to be reflected. The point of my Algerian colleague was that the report has to be factual. For it to be factual we have to reflect that a proposed programme of work was submitted and that action was taken on it.

Ms. Mehta (India): Mr. President, the delegation of India thanks you for circulating a draft of the Conference's annual report for 2012, in accordance with rule 44 of our rules of procedure. We listened to your observations on this subject at our last meeting with great interest. My delegation looks forward to the smooth and early adoption of the report.

Mr. President, you pointed out last week that the annual reports of the Conference are factual and reflect the activity and work within the Conference. I would like to note that the Conference's annual reports have a format and a tone that has become traditional. These reports are submitted to the General Assembly, which considers them as part of a traditional agenda item on the review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament that identified the Conference as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. We agree with what you said about the way to proceed in finalizing this important document. We look forward to the consultations you said you would convene in an informal setting on the text of the report. We will have a few suggestions for improving the draft, which I am not going to go into at this point; but we do believe that the draft itself does offer a good basis for moving forward. We hope that we can work together to adopt the report by consensus at the earliest.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan): Mr. President, first I will seek your indulgence to inform the secretariat through you that most of the delegates have been encountering a lot of problems in accessing the electronic database on the United Nations website, particularly on the disarmament website. Sometimes we get access to the document, at other times it is blocked; there is some malfunction, I think. Particularly during the phase of report-writing it is of great use to small delegations to be able to access the documents on the website instead of carrying them around. So, through you, we request the secretariat to look into the matter. It might be a minor technical hitch that can be overcome. We also wish to acknowledge the service provided by the secretariat; it has been of enormous use and the secretariat maintains a very good website.

Coming specifically to the issue at hand, I would wish, first of all, to thank you for presenting the draft report in a very timely manner. As you promised, you have followed all your timelines in this regard, and we understand how much hard work your own delegation has put in, in preparing this report. We think that it is a good basis for moving forward, and, as you pointed out, we will not go into any drafting exercise at this point, but just reiterate certain points of principle in terms of the report-writing practice which has evolved. The expectations of the members here in terms of the report are that it should be factual and follow past practice and structure, as given in the rules of procedure. I wish to just add one word of caution here. Of course, this debate on revitalization has demonstrated that there are diverging views about how to revitalize the Conference on Disarmament. You rightly said that there is a concern in the room about the state of the Conference; but at the same time, I do not see consensus in the room on how this concern should be reflected or conveyed to the General Assembly.

Our advice would be not to complicate the exercise of report-writing by trying to foist our own views or predilections on a report-writing exercise that is supposed to be factual and, I would rather say, clinical. In that context, I would particularly urge or request that we should avoid value judgements and use of adjectives. This will keep our job very simple and we will be able to wrap it up very quickly. I must acknowledge once again the excellent work done by your delegation, and we understand that it was a lot of work. We wish to acknowledge your own prodigious capacity for hard work; we understand that the draft report was entirely written by the German delegation. It is an excellent basis for

moving forward, and we are in your hands. We look forward to a smooth process of report-writing and, with that, I wish to thank you once again Mr. President.

The President: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement. On the first point, I will indeed ask the secretariat to look into access to the website, and I will also join you in thanking them for the good work they are doing on the website. Indeed, I myself had encountered these problems. I always thought it was my fault, but now I see that others seem to have had the same problem. Secondly, we worked very well together, the secretariat and the presidency, on drafting the report, and it is certainly exaggerating to say that it was entirely written by the presidency; it was a good collaborative effort with the secretariat.

I see that the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran has asked for the floor.

Mr. Daryaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, allow me to express my deep appreciation of your efforts in preparing this draft report, which is really a good basis for further negotiation, and we really appreciate your effort and the effort of your delegation.

As you rightly mentioned, we have differences in the diagnosis and treatment of the problem in this Conference. If you will allow me, I would like to add that we also have differences in the reflection of the problem. So, some countries may see the report as a rosy picture, while others may see some part of the report as too negative and an exaggeration of the current problems. I think that what we can do is like past practice: we do our consultations; we do our further negotiations in order to have a text that is acceptable to everybody and reflects the current situation in the Conference. So, in that regard we assure you of the full cooperation of this delegation. I think that our colleague from Algeria raised a point, and that might be the crux of the problem we have; we might have some proposals on paragraphs 5; 15, 17, 21 and 22. We will provide our exact wording later, by your suggested deadline, and I hope that we can stick to that deadline.

The President: Well, I suppose it is in everybody's interest if we stick to deadlines, so you are aware of the amendments coming; and it makes our collective work easier.

I see the representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, my delegation would like to thank you and the secretariat for the work you have done in preparing the draft report. If we were to describe the colours in which this report is written, I would say that it is written in black and white, reflecting the facts. So I can say that we would be ready to support your report as it stands today.

The President: Thank you very much. In fact I got a bit worried when you said "black and white", because it seemed to imply that it was a bit too stark, but, in fact, the print is black and the paper is white and that is very factual. I appreciate, of course, that you are in agreement with, or can live with, the report as it stands.

I see that the representative of the Netherlands is asking for the floor.

Mr. van den IJssel (Netherlands): Mr. President, first of all, thanks to you and the secretariat for the hard work that resulted in this draft report, which I think is a very sincere and serious effort to describe what we have done this year. Many delegations have spoken about the need for a factual report, and I agree; but the main fact, in my view, of this year's session is that, once again, the Conference has not been able to make progress on a programme of work. If we talk about facts, this is a fact that should be reflected. I agree with my colleague from Canada, who said earlier that if criticism is possible of this report, then it is because it is written in too rosy terms. I think that we could perhaps work on some of the elements mentioned to give a better reflection of the situation we are in – a factual

description. I am thinking about paragraph 5, for example, or paragraph 7. I have heard some colleagues arguing that it should be given a positive spin that I would find very difficult to understand. I mean, if you are talking about facts, I would find that a bit difficult. I think we should be very clear and factual about what is happening, as said by all those who visited the Conference. In my view, many of the visiting dignitaries spoke about their concern for the Conference, and I hope we can reflect that. So, in short, Mr. President, I thank you very much. We may come up with some suggestions, but I think it is important that we give fair picture of where we are and, unfortunately, I must say that it is not a very rosy state of affairs. That is not what I would like to say, but that is where we are, and I think it is fair to reflect it.

Mr. Reid (United States of America): In the interest of time, I will keep my remarks brief, since we are just in a general comments section. I must say that my capital would pay its compliments to the presidency and the secretariat for their collaborative effort in putting together what we find a very impressive first draft. I imagine, judging from colleagues' comments so far, that we will have some further exchanges on this, but we basically think that you have drafted a pretty good document. We have talked about rules of procedure and factual reports. The reality is that this will be a compromise report where we could spend the next two to three weeks going back and forth and probably come out with something that is a far lesser product than what we have before us right now, and that is our governing notion at this point. I imagine that my capital will have some sympathy for our Egyptian colleague's remarks, and I plan to report back to my capital and seek further instructions, but I cannot say that there is a reasonable outcome when this document will include three more weeks of discussion and an awful lot of legalistic informal sessions, such as many of us endured last year. If we do start digging into this more, I would say that there is a little bit of a factual deficit, in particular as to how we went through the discussion of paragraph 15 or how the current draft depicts paragraph 15. Again our Egyptian colleague has alluded to that, but I do not think that my capital is convinced that we need to come up with an archive-like version of the entire process yet either. So my appeal to colleagues now would be to look at the fact that 90 to 95 per cent done is good enough for this process, and that we need to focus on the very important deliberations that we have awaiting us in New York.

Ms. Tang (France) (*spoke in French*): I was not intending to take the floor today, Mr. President, but I would like to repeat here, in the plenary, the information we already conveyed to you at the meeting of the six Presidents, that is, that France considered your report an excellent one. You stick to the facts, and we think it perhaps unnecessary to enter into never-ending discussions, as turned out to be the case last year, because it is very, very difficult to find a balance between the views expressed, including on the situation of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Corr (Ireland): Mr. President, I would also like to thank you and the secretariat for what I think is an excellent draft, and to share my view before you receive the amendments and we start informal meetings. I think that the balance in the report is extremely good. I do agree with the point made by the distinguished representative of Egypt, and I think that it is an important point. I also think that, in terms of rule 45 of the Conference's rules of procedure, and the factual point which has been mentioned by many delegations, and which you mentioned in your statement on 21 August, that we also have to look at the point of reflecting negotiations and the work of the Conference. I think that the work of the Conference requires a judicious reflection of the balance that we have looked at during the year. So I think that in terms of the key paragraphs such as paragraphs 5, 7, 15 and 17, these are all paragraphs where we do try to separate the precise details of logistics from wider points of definition about work during the year. So, as we begin next week at looking in more detail at amendments, I would only say I share the view that I think the balance you have struck in this text is a very reasonable and judicious one and, while there

may also be time for looking at one or two amendments here and there in some of these paragraphs, I think that it would be very good if we could, more or less, reflect the balance that we do have in the text now, which seems to me very sensible and reasonable.

Mr. Puentes (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, allow me first of all to congratulate you, as this is the first time I have taken the floor since you took the Chair. I am sure that with your wisdom and your diplomatic experience you will guide us successfully through the work related to the report that we are negotiating.

We were not intending to take the floor, but we have heard certain comments that oblige us to express our initial reaction to the report. We believe that the report is a good basis for the discussions that we will be having in the coming weeks. However, we will not be so bold as to describe it as optimistic, or as either negative or positive. We have certain proposals to make, which we will submit to you through the requested channel, but what we would like to say now is that Cuba believes that there are certain lacunae in the report that we should duly reflect.

I reiterate, in this connection, that we will submit our proposals for changes through the channel proposed by you, and we think that we must reflect in this report everything that we possibly can and that is factual, because when we begin debating what it is that needs to be reflected and we apply a percentage to it, a 95 or a 90, that 95 per cent or 90 per cent may vary according to each State's view as to what is most important and what isn't.

For this reason, we are in favour of having a report that reflects, factually, insofar as possible, the discussions that we have held in the course of this year in the Conference on Disarmament.

The President: I thank the representative of Cuba for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. To what extent can everything be reflected in a report as discussed during the course of this session remains to be seen. Let's put it this way. I have China on my list. The representative of China, please.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): My delegation would like to express its appreciation for the constructive and effective work carried out by the P6 this year, and we would also like to express our thanks for the efforts made by Ambassador Hoffmann, with the assistance of the secretariat, to draft the annual report of the Conference. China believes that the annual report should reflect the Conference's work over the year in a comprehensive, objective and balanced manner.

We have had a first look at the draft report. Overall, it covers the work carried out by the Conference this year fairly comprehensively and provides a good basis for further consultations. Of course, we have also noted the recommendations that some colleagues have just made on how to reflect this year's work. I believe there is room for further improvement in the specific content of some parts of the draft.

First, when referencing or summarizing statements, the report should reflect parties' views in a more balanced way. Second, the report should maintain a factual tone and avoid using emotionally charged language. Third, it should reflect the real progress made this year in the work of the Conference, so as to lay a solid foundation for our work next year.

Mr. President, I hope that by holding open and transparent consultations and listening attentively to the parties' views you will be able to draft a document that all member States can accept. The Chinese delegation will submit its proposed amendments to the secretariat in writing within the next few days.

Mr. Wilson (Australia): Mr. President, I will be brief. First of all, I just wanted to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency. We look forward to working with you for the rest of your presidency. I also wanted to thank you and the secretariat for their

work on presenting this draft. As I said, I will be very brief. I simply wish to echo the comments made by the Ambassador for Ireland regarding balance in the text. I also want to reflect on something that he said last week about the constituency of this institution, and I think it also rings true for the constituency of this report. We often hear about this institution not operating in a vacuum, and yet every year we go into a room and behave as though it does as we try to pull apart and then reassemble this draft. I think we should reflect on the constituency of this report and, as I said, the comments that Ambassador Corr of Ireland has made on the balance which already exists in this report.

Mr. Pedro Oyarce (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, I am not going to make a speech at this late hour, but I would not want to miss the opportunity to thank you and the secretariat for having produced a draft annual report that, to be very brief, has two merits. Firstly, it reflects a panorama that is as objective as possible and close to what I would say is the real world. Of course, as has been highlighted here, there are different views. There is an element of subjectivity, probably in relation to this real world, but I believe that the report incorporates a fair balance. This is the first observation.

The second is quite closely related to what the Ambassador of Ireland said, and what Mr. Paul Wilson of Australia said, to the effect that what is important is the message that we convey to the constituency, and this is a central issue that goes beyond the reaction itself, it is a political issue. I would like to conclude by indicating that although in all documents with this degree of sensitivity there may be room for amendments, insofar as possible I hope that we can endeavour to maintain the initial balance.

The President: I thank Ambassador Oyarce for his statement.

Are there any more requests for the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

Let me just say that I think this was an interesting first exchange. I am pleased with the comments I heard. My impression is that we are not really that far apart. I am quite optimistic that we will be able to solve this task, hopefully rather quickly. Indeed, I do not want to spend too much time on that, but we will see how it goes.

Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? Is it any other business, or still on this point? The representative of the United States please.

Mr. Reid (United States of America): Mr. President, I may be bracketing both what we were just discussing and the procedure that you were about to go into, because this is more a point of procedure. If colleagues are now going to move to bring specific texts to your attention that will lead to drafting sessions, we may reserve the right to come back to certain points ourselves; but we may not have specific texts that we will necessarily bring to your attention by the deadline you suggested, on Thursday. Is it your expectation, based on the initial rounds of discussions and the resulting drafting work, that we will have further opportunities to put forward suggestions either in a meeting or in written form to the secretariat after 30 August?

The President: Absolutely. My intention was that delegations would hand in what they would like to see amended in this draft report. However, as you know, when drafting starts, there may be a necessity to add a further element here or there; but I hope that you will not hold back with fundamental ideas that you may already have. It would make our collective life much easier if we had this on the table by Thursday and you get it by Friday. Then you are always free to come in with additional ideas, but please do not hold them back until next week, because this will only make life more difficult. So, please, if you could send your amendments to the secretariat by Friday afternoon, you will get them by Friday evening in your pigeonholes.

We will have a first plenary meeting to discuss this again in a formal setting where you can make more general remarks next week. However, I intend to adjourn the plenary

meeting rather quickly; it depends how it goes, but that is my intention. We will start the actual drafting on the basis of the amendments in informal mode right after the formal meeting has been adjourned. Interpretation will be provided; but, as you know, for informal meetings there will be no verbatim records, which I think makes our life easier. Then, we will see how it goes. If necessary, we will have additional meetings, possibly in the afternoon, in a working group format. Everybody who wishes to attend is invited to do so, and we will take it from there. So, with that, I will adjourn today's meeting and we will see each other again at the next plenary meeting next week, on Tuesday at 10 a.m.

I have just been told that the secretariat invites you to send in your amendments by Thursday midday, not by 3 p.m., to help it produce the compilation of all amendments. That ends today's meeting.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.